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THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SOUTH DURING THE WAR.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE

John A. Andrew Post,

No. 15. G. A. R.,

In Boston, Massachusetts, Dec. 8, 1886,

BY

SENATOR Z. B. VANCE,

OF NORTH CAROLINA.

"Let us read the inscription on the other side of the shield."

WASHINGTON, D. C.
R. O. POLKINHORN, PRINTER.
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LECTURE.

The Political and Social South during the War.

My presence here to-night, ladies and gentlemen, occasions me a degree of embarrassment. I was prominently involved in the affairs about which I propose to speak, having taken an active part in both the military and civil transactions of my State during the period of war. On the one hand I am under the dures of your hospitality, which tempts me to say the things which would prove most agreeable to you ; on the other hand, I somewhat fear that, if I should be too plain spoken, I might become liable to the charge of abusing the privileges of a guest. Should I fail in properly avoiding either extreme I beg you to give me credit for good intentions at least. I honestly desire to speak the simple truth as it appears to me. This I believe is what you wish to hear ! [Cries, " that's what we want."] Necessarily my remarks will be discursive and with no pretension to the preciseness and continuity of narration which should characterize a historical essay. I shall endeavor to entertain you for a brief space with the ideas and observations of occurrences as they appeared to a Southern man concerning the great civil war.

It is proper that you should hear the inscription read upon the other side of the shield.

This generation is yet too near to the great struggle to deal with it in the true historic spirit. Yet it is well enough for you to remember that the South is quite as far removed from it as is the North ; and the North has industriously undertaken from the beginning to write the history of that contest between the sections, to set forth its causes and to justify its results,—and naturally in the interest of the victorious side. It is both wise and considerate of you to let the losing side be heard in your midst. If you should refuse to do so it will nevertheless be heard in time, before that great bar, the public opinion of the world, whose jurisdiction you cannot avoid, and whose verdict you cannot unduly influence. Neither side acts wisely in attempting to forestall that verdict !

It is well to remember, too, that epithets and hard names, which assume the guilt that is to be proven, will not serve for arguments for the future Bancrofts and Hildredths of the Republic, except for the purpose of warning them against the intemperate partiality of their authors.

The modest action of the common law should be imitated in the treatment of historic questions, which considers every accused person as innocent until his guilt is proven. Murder is treated as simply homicide until there is proof that the killing was felonious.

In treating, for example, of all questions pertaining to the war, you assume the guilt of your adversaries at the outset. You speak of the secession movement as a rebellion, and you characterize all who participated in it as " rebels and traitors ! " Your daily literature, as well as your daily conversation, teems with it. Your school histories and books of elementary instruction impress it in almost every page

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upon the young. Your laws, State and Federal, have enacted the terms. Yet every lawyer and intelligent citizen among you must be well aware that in a technical and legal sense *there was no rebellion*, and there were no rebels! Should this not be admitted, however, I am sure there will be no denial of the fact that you once had the opportunity of obtaining an authoritative decision of the highest court, not only of the United States, but of the world, on this very question—and that opportunity was not embraced.

I hope you will not be alarmed; it is not my intention to make you listen to an argument in favor of the right of secession. I only wish to remind you of some of the *prima facie* reasons why the people of the North—and of Massachusetts in particular—should not assume the verdict of history in their favor when they declined to test the verdict of the law. [Applause.]

In attempting to withdraw herself from the Union of the States by repealing, on the 20th of May, 1861, the ordinance by the adoption of which she had entered the Union on the 21st of November, 1789, against whom and what did North Carolina rebel? To whom had she sworn allegiance? Certainly to nobody; to no Government; to nothing but the Constitution of the United States. Was she violating that oath when she thus withdrew? When Virginia and New York reserved, upon their accession to the Constitution, their right to withdraw from the same, and declared that the powers therein granted might be resumed whenever the same shall be perverted to "their injury or oppression," did those States reserve the right to commit treason? When Massachusetts openly threatened to separate from the Union upon the admission of Louisiana as a State, was she conscious that she was threatening treason and rebellion? When her Legislature, in 1803, "resolved that the annexation of Louisiana to the Union transcends the Constitutional power of the Government of the United States," and that it "formed a new Confederacy to which the States united by the former compact are not bound to adhere;" was not that a declaration that secession was a Constitutional remedy? Again, the same principle was proclaimed by the authority of Massachusetts in the Hartford Convention, where it was declared "that when emergencies occur which are either beyond the reach of judicial tribunals or too pressing to admit of delay incident to their forms, States which have no common umpire must be their own judges and execute their own decisions." With such a record, to which might be added page after page of corroborating quotation from her statesmen and her archives, should not the ancient commonwealth of Massachusetts be a little modest in denouncing as "traitors" those whose sin consisted in the following of her example? It has been said that the groundwork and essence of the doctrine of secession was laid in the Virginia resolutions of 1798, of which Mr. Madison, the leading spirit, the Morning Star of the convention which formed the Constitution, was the author. If so, let it be remembered that these resolutions were submitted to every State in the then Union, of course, including Massachusetts; were expressly or tacitly approved by all, and disapproved by none.

Indeed, it may be said generally that during the period of discussion concerning the adoption of the Constitution by the several States, it was taken for granted that any State becoming dissatisfied might withdraw from the compact, *for cause* of which she was to be her own judge. The old articles of Confederation declared that the Union formed thereunder should be perpetual; this clause was purposely

and after discussion, left out of the new Constitution. The great danger apprehended by the statesmen of that day was that the Federal Government would gradually encroach upon and absorb the rights of the States. In deference to this fear the Xth Amendment was adopted, chiefly on the urgent instigation of Massachusetts, expressly reserving to the States all rights not delegated. Still these fears remained. In fact these encroachments upon the rights of States have constituted for three-fourths of a century the great distinguishing subject of contention between American statesmen; during all of which time, it was claimed that secession was a Constitutional remedy therefor. If it had been understood that over the doors of the Constitution were written *nulla restigia retrorsum*; that the State which entered there could never more depart thence, whatever might be the injuries and oppressions inflicted upon her, how many States would have entered therein? What would jealous, sensitive Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina have said to such a proposition? Would they have subjected their citizens to a condition of things wherein North Carolina for example could have hung a man in her borders if he refused to fight for her, and Massachusetts and the others could have hung him if he did?

The essence of all crime is to be found in the criminal intent. Now the object of these brief references to the doctrine of secession is to ask you and the conservative, legal sentiment of the Northern people how you could convict and execute a man for the intentional commission of a crime, when the greatest intellects of the whole American people had not been able to determine that the act committed *was* a crime; when the act committed had been pronounced a Constitutional right, an essential muniment of freedom, by legislatures of great States, by a long line of great and glorious statesmen; by primary assemblages of the people, by conventions of great political parties, whose enunciations received again and again the endorsement of a majority of the American people at the polls; when the Constitution itself was silent as to express words, and when no court of law had ever found by implication or legal deduction that this act was a crime! The idea of holding the citizen up to all the legal penalties and responsibilities of treason under such circumstances is revolting to our sense of human justice. Now if you would not or could not thus inflict upon him the severe penalties of law, is it just, is it fair, is it christian charity to assume his guilt and visit upon him socially and politically all the odium of one actually condemned; so far, as daily, hourly iteration can do it? May we not fairly retort upon you that if secession be indeed a crime—you taught it to us. Sir Edward Coke says of copyhold tenures, that though of base descent, they are of a most ancient house; we can say here that though secession be an infamous doctrine, yet it had a most illustrious origin, Virginia and Massachusetts. [Loud applause.]

Oh, wise and patriotic enemy of secession who fought that monster by a "substitute," and who enriched yourself by speculation on the distresses and confusions of war, spare us! [Laughter].

Oh, brave, true soldiers of the Union, and all you people who had honest convictions of the un wisdom of our acts, ye who fought and sacrificed for love of country and its fair autonomy, spare us, who were equally brave, equally honest, but not equally fortunate!

Again, my friends, we of the South have most serious cause to complain of you in reference to your efforts to forestall history in regard to the causes which led to secession and war. It is written: "Thou shalt

not bear false witness against thy neighbor." You say that it was slavery, and slavery alone, that caused the war. In your literature it is spoken of as the "slave-holders-rebellion." A false shot out of both barrels! Slavery was the *occasion*, not the cause of war. You put us in the position not only of traitors and rebels but of becoming such for the privilege of holding human beings in bondage, thereby heaping upon us all the reproach and opprobrium that such a thing renders possible. This is at once a misrepresentation and an injustice. The great majority of the people of the South entertained in the abstract as much repugnance to slave-holding as you did.

Their fault in respect to slavery, as with secession, was not all to be charged upon them. As usual, Massachusetts comes in for the lion's share. Boston and Providence slavers vexed the seas in their ungodly search for kidnapped Africans to be bought in exchange for New England rum and sold to the Southern Plantations, against which Old Virginia and other Southern States protested.

Nay, by reference to the history of the constitution it will be seen that New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut united with North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia in postponing the suppression of the slave trade for twenty years, in the formation of that instrument: the Southern States because they wanted the slaves, the Northern States because they had large shipping interests engaged in the profit of buying and carrying them to market. "The horrors of the middle passage" belonged to you; we only *bought* your wares. The desire to protect her infant industries was thus manifested even at that early day against her ancient rival, England, whose "pauper labor" was engaged in the same trade.

So, too, a fierce arraignment of King George III, for forcing the slave trade upon the colonies was inserted by Mr. Jefferson in the original draft of the Declaration of Independence. It was stricken out at the instigation of the Eastern States as well as Southern, because it was felt to be a reflection on citizens of Massachusetts and of Rhode Island engaged in the slave trade. Slavery and the slave trade were in full and cruel operation in Massachusetts before there was a white man's home in North Carolina, a slave trade which not only imported Africans, but exported Africans, Indians, and, worst of all, our own race—the people of our own blood! How slavery grew and ramified through all the South, under the natural stimulus of climate and productions, and how the abstract sentiment against it was extinguished by the political necessities of the times, arising from the fierce attacks made upon it by the States to whose climate and pursuits it was unsuited, and who therefore sold out, quit business and turned philanthropist! All this is an old, old story; and I only allude to it to remind you that you are not at liberty to cast the first stone. [Applause.]

The ownership of slaves and the regulation of the system were left to the exclusive control of the States, not only by the Tenth amendment which reserved to them all rights and powers not expressly granted to the Federal government, but its existence was specially recognized and its safety specially provided for in the constitution itself. It being a matter, therefore, of purely domestic concern, wholly within the control of the States, the attempt to interfere with it by the Federal government in any shape, directly or indirectly, was justly regarded as a violation of constitutional right, and injurious to that perfect equality of the States guaranteed by the constitution. That is why we went to war. Slavery happened to be the particular item or instance wherein this equality was assailed; and in resistance to this at-

tempt of the Federal Government to interfere within a State in a matter which peculiarly pertained to that State we resorted to secession as a peaceable remedy. The thing which made our forefathers hesitate to adopt the constitution at all, had here come upon us, and the remedy which our forefathers—and yours—had suggested as the only one proper or possible, was naturally resorted to.

Had it been conceded by submission that the Federal government could interfere in the matter of slavery, we would have been logically precluded from resistance to like interference for any other cause whatever, and there was an end to the rights and equality of the States under the constitution forever; and therefore an end to the freedom, sovereignty, and independence of each State which, according to all writers and statesmen, north and south, was retained by them when they acceded to the constitution.

It was a constitutional principle for which we fought; not merely the right to hold slaves. So far as I have the right to speak for the people of North Carolina, I believe that with them this war was one for principle as purely and simply as was the war of 1776; as sacred a principle as that which made Boston men disguise themselves and throw the tea overboard (by the way the first kluksing ever known in America), and made the North Carolina militia of the Cape Fear openly and without disguise seize the British Stamp-Master, destroy his stamps and force him to take an oath not to execute the stamp act in that colony.

It will not do to say that the Federal government was not interfering with or threatening slavery at the time of secession.

Northern States were openly violating the provisions of the constitution relative to the return of fugitive slaves. A president had just been elected on the principle of avowed hostility to slavery, by a strict sectional vote. No one doubts now or could doubt then, that a war upon the reserved rights of the States, waged in the name of slavery, was the animating motive of the great party which had just come into power. No pretext could disguise it. So late as June, 1862, a Congress composed entirely of representatives of the adhering States, solemnly declared that the Federal government had no power to abolish slavery and that the war was waged exclusively for the preservation of the Union. In six months thereafter slavery was abolished all the same. The real point of attack was then disclosed. Do not misunderstand me, I am not ashamed of the term "rebel" in connection with the part I bore in those events, neither are my people. I am simply pleading for historic, legal truth. The fair Goddess Liberty was born of rebellion, and was baptised in the blood of rebels. It is the only remedy for wrong under absolute government; in all ages it has been the last hope of freedom. I have said this much in the earnest desire that it might call your attention to an injustice, which you are daily perpetrating, not for the purpose of reviving an issue which has been settled. Now that it has been settled in a manner satisfactory to you, you can afford to do justice to the motives and the conduct of your opponents,—you can afford to accept the late war as an appeal to arms to decide a disputed question of constitutional construction,—one of the few vital questions which the wisdom of the fathers did not make sufficiently clear. That will be the verdict of history when your passions and mine shall have been forever extinguished in death. Need you say anything more? Does your reputation or vindication require that you should asperse your adversaries? I trow not. The preservation of the Union with all which that means, the settlement

of a great constitutional question, which threatened its safety, is your all-sufficient justification and your rightful glory. [Applause]. You add not a spark to that splendid radiance, which gathered around the defenders of the Union, by casting abuse upon those whom you overcame. Here, let me remark, that a new duty is imposed upon you by the very fact of your great achievement; now that your swords have definitely settled the question that the Union is indissoluble; that no State for whatever cause has any right to withdraw therefrom; that secession is not a constitutional remedy for grievances, it devolves upon you as just men to see that by a strict adherence to the conditions of the Union no State shall have reasonable cause to complain. [Applause]

The people of North Carolina, more, perhaps, than those of any of the eleven seceding States, were devoted to the Union. They had always regarded it with sincerest reverence, and affection, and they left it slowly and with sorrow. They were actuated by an honest conviction—

1st. That their constitutional rights were endangered, not by the mere election of Mr. Lincoln, as others did, but by the course which subsequent events were compelled to take in consequence of the ideas which were behind him;

2d. By the force of neighborhood and association;

3d. By a fatality of events which ordinary prudence could not have avoided. The Union men of that State, of whom I was one, whatever may have been their doubts of the propriety of secession, were unanimous in the opinion that it was neither right nor safe to permit the General Government to coerce a State. In their arguments therefore with the secession advocates they logically took the position that should coercion be attempted they would unite with the secessionists in resisting it. During the last session of Congress, which preceded the outbreak, the winter of 1860 and '61, the Union members of Congress from Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia, after earnest and anxious consultation, constituted a committee to wait upon Mr. Lincoln, who was then in the city preparatory to his inauguration, and present him their views in regard to the situation. They did so, and my colleague, the Hon. John A. Gilmer, gave me the results of their interview. It was represented to Mr. Lincoln by them that the Cotton States proper alone could not make any effectual headway in maintaining secession without the aid of the great border States of Missouri, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina and Tennessee; that the population of those States was devoted to the Union, but could not be held to that position should coercion be attempted and the blood of their southern brethren be shed. They expressed to him the opinion that the secession movement could be checked and finally broken down if those great States could be kept out of it. Mr. Lincoln appeared fully impressed with the wisdom of these views and promised that if possible he would avoid the attempt at coercion. In his inaugural address he committed himself only to the announcement that his duty would compel him to hold and possess the public property of the United States. I quote from memory. With this promise and these hopes the Union Congressmen from these States returned to their homes and began their canvassings for re election. They promised the people that no force would be attempted, and if there should be, they could and would no longer hold out for the Union. As precarious as this posi-

tion was, such was the temper of the Southern people, it was all that the situation afforded even in States so conservative.

But when Fort Sumpter was fired upon, immediately followed by Mr. Lincoln's call for "volunteers to suppress the insurrection," the whole situation was changed instantly. The Union men had every prop knocked from under them, and by stress of their own position were plunged into the secession movement. For myself, I will say, that I was canvassing for the Union with all my strength; I was addressing a large and excited crowd, large numbers of whom were armed, and literally had my arm extended upward in pleading for peace and the Union of our Fathers, when the telegraphic news was announced of the firing on Sumpter and the President's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers. When my hand came down from that impassioned gesticulation, it fell slowly and sadly by the side of a Secessionist. I immediately, with altered voice and manner called upon the assembled multitude to volunteer, not to fight against but for South Carolina. I said: If war must come I preferred to be with my own people. If we had to shed blood I preferred to shed Northern rather than Southern blood. If we had to slay I had rather slay strangers than my own kindred and neighbors; and that it was better, whether right or wrong; that communities and States should go together and face the horrors of war in a body—sharing a common fate, rather than endure the unspeakable calamities of internicine strife. To those at all acquainted with the atrocities which were inflicted upon the divided communities of Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee, the humanity of my action will be apparent. I went with and shared the fate of the people of my native State, having first done all I could to preserve the peace and secure the unanimity of the people to avert, as much as possible, the calamities of war. I do not regret that course. I do not believe there is an honorable man within my hearing to-night who, under the same circumstances, would not have done as I did [Much applause.]

My own feeling and conduct is given as a specimen of that of the people of North Carolina at large. I charge no bad faith on Mr. Lincoln for this entrapment; doubtless his intentions were as sincere as those of Union men with whom he conferred. Events were happening so rapidly and so irresistibly that he could see no further ahead than others. His course from day to day was shaped by his surroundings, —so was ours!

The argument having ceased and the sword being drawn, all classes in the South united as by magic, as only a common danger could unite them. No people were more zealous and unanimous than became the Unionists of my State in support of the war; because they had been honest in their belief that coercion was wrong, and because they felt conscious of having done all that was honorable to avert hostilities. The co-relative duty now was to do all that was manly to fight it out. Well and truly she performed that duty, as the result on many a stricken field will show. First and last she sent to the armies of the Confederacy, not relatively but absolutely, more soldiers than any other State in the South; furnished more supplies, equipped her troops better. On *many* of the hardest fought fields of Northern Virginia she left more dead and wounded upon the blood-soaked earth than all the other Southern States combined. At Appomattox she laid down at the feet of General Grant double the number of muskets of any other State in the Confederacy. She did the same at Greensboro. There was not a sacrifice which she was called upon to make

for the good of the Southern cause that she did not make, and make cheerfully.

Thou, from old-fashioned, steady, sober, modest North Carolina, in a quarrel not of her making; in a war not of her choosing. I mention these things not with the expectation of exciting your applause in behalf of people whose opinions are so widely different from yours, who fought against your armies and sought to withdraw from political association with you, but with the earnest hope of enlisting your sympathy for that kind of statesmanship which seeks to utilize such noble citizenship for the purposes of the Republic, and because I believe that a true soldier can honor courage and faithfulness to duty wherever he sees it displayed by any portion of the great American people. All genius, all steadfastness, all public and private virtue is the common property of our country.

Instead of fostering bitterness and devoting politics to those small prejudices which are calculated to carry a ward or a township primary, I beg your recognition, of that wiser and nobler policy which seeks to make every spark of genius, every arm of strength, every heart of integrity, and every soul of fire in America contributory to the strengthening and the up-building of freedom, and the glory of the great Republic. [Great applause.]

But I did not come before you to-night to discourse upon the military aspects and operations of that struggle (though it is a tempting theme), but rather to speak of its political and civil condition. Within two weeks after the opening of hostilities at Sumpter, a convention of the people of North Carolina which, in the February preceding had been voted down by a large majority, as looking towards disunion, was called together in Raleigh to consider and provide for the situation. In it were the ablest men in our State, perhaps the ablest which were ever assembled in our State in a body. They were composed of whigs, democrats, unionists, and secessionists: there were Gov. Morehead, Gov. Graham, George E. Badger, Thos Ruffin, John A. Gilmer, Burton Craig, James W. Osborne, N. W. Wordfin, and others of similar high character and ability. The last semblance of old party distinctions was exhibited in that convention in the contest as to the method of retiring from the Union and joining the new Confederacy. The Unionists proposed a resolution of withdrawal, containing a declaration *in extenso* of the causes of separation; the Secessionists opposed it by an ordinance simply repealing the ordinance of 1789, by which North Carolina had entered the Union. The latter prevailed, and thenceforth all distinctions measurably disappeared. At first the popular feeling was one of great confidence and hope. The country was prosperous and full of material resources. The novelty of war with all its pomp and circumstance filled the land with unusual and lofty feeling. Say what you will about slavery it had filled our country with a class of young men admirably fitted for war; men with habits formed to command; with a consciousness of superiority, and with a sense of chivalry which taught them to believe that personal courage was one of the highest of human virtues. Your people thought, and frequently said, that they had become effeminated by slavery and luxurious habits, and could not endure the hardships of war. You did not find it so. On the other hand we thought you were enfeebled in like manner by your in-door lives of shop and factory: we, too, found it somewhat different. Indeed both sides undervalued their adversaries, a not uncommon fault in people about to go

to war. The buoyant and hopeful feeling which animated our people at the beginning of the struggle was sustained by the belief that on principle they were in the right; and especially that they were on the defensive and had their homes and firesides to defend against desolation. They furthermore believed—and they certainly were entitled to that opinion for they paid a high price for it—that as a commercial and manufacturing people, much given to the making of money, you would not long continue a contest in which there was apparently no money to be made.—Alas, we reckoned without our host in this respect. We did not know how Yankee ingenuity was equal to the task of making money where it was spent; how it could accumulate wealth out of the very process of exhaustion. [Laughter.] But we did not believe, as has been often charged, that we could starve you into peace, by withholding our cotton. There were some who professed to believe this, but the lunatic asylums of the State (and there were not many), could have furnished accommodation for them all.

Many of our people, too, among those who had been most devoted Unionists, soon came to look at things in a philosophic spirit, in their desire to reconcile them-selves to the situation. They recalled the old historic idea that liberty was best preserved in countries of small extent, whose governments came most immediately under the observation of the governed, and whose officials were most directly responsible to their constituents; and that in countries of great territorial extent, filled with vast populations, of diverse interests and pursuits, there would naturally be a demand for a strong government, and a government was made strong necessarily by conferring upon it powers wrested from the people,—a process most undoubtedly dangerous to liberty. They considered also that the centralizing tendencies of the times, which they had always been taught to dread, might best be checked by a division of this great land into two or more nationalities, when in individual rights might still be made to constitute the primal objects of the smaller governments, rather than the national glory which threatened to aggrandize the movement of the one great united government. Whatever may be your opinion of these views, I only wish here to assure you that they were widely entertained, and that they served to reconcile many to the proposed separation.

With such feelings and hopes the war was begun! Volunteers were first called upon for six months, then for twelve months; then for "three years or the war"—no man supposing that it could exceed three years in duration.

Promises were freely made that six months must wind it up. Looking back at it all now, it is easy for us to assume a superior wisdom, and laugh at all this folly. The first Congress of the Confederacy, sitting in Montgomery, Alabama, provided for the raising of fifteen millions of dollars for the support of the war. They did not want the President embarrassed for want of money. For this they were seriously rebuked in many quarters for pernicious extravagance; and it was alleged that we were beginning already to fall into the habit of the U. S. Government, in thus accumulating useless money in the treasury to become a source of corruption. It seems to me however that some of this kind of lunacy was also displayed on this side of the line. I think I remember some promises of Mr. Seward of suppressing the rebellion on ninety-days-after sight, exclusive of the usual days of grace allowed on commercial paper. [Laughter.] But whatever the mistakes our leaders made in calling for troops, the troops came; came so promptly and in such numbers that neither their own

States nor the Confederate Government could receive and properly provide for them. Numbers were refused, and it was often considered a special favor for a regiment or a battalion to be accepted and sent to the front.

At this time and for twelve or fifteen months afterwards the civil authorities of the new Confederate Government were very popular and were most cordially supported by all classes. In the winter of 1861-2 a change began to take place. The time of the six months' volunteers had expired, and that of the twelve months' men was approaching expiration, and it was seen that if they were all at once mustered out the Confederacy would be left without a sufficient army, at the very opening of a campaign. Efforts were at first made to induce the troops in the field to re-enlist, but for various causes these efforts were only partially successful. By this time much of the novelty of the thing had worn off; the volunteers had seen service enough to gratify their curiosity, and the people had experienced what it was to be in a state of actual war. Both soldiers and people had also tasted somewhat of its unpleasant elements. The enthusiasm which had been excited by the victories of Big Bethel, Manassas and other engagements of the first year's campaign, had sensibly diminished. And on the whole, people were no longer disposed to go far out of the way for the sake of being shot at. Seeing, therefore, whilst yet these efforts at re-enlistments were going on, that the result was at least doubtful, the Confederate Congress suddenly ended the matter by the enactment of a sweeping conscript law, placing every able-bodied man, between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, with certain exceptions, in the service. Here the first open and undisguised complaints were heard, and the murmurings grew louder when the nature of the exceptions was ascertained. One of the exceptions from the operations of the law was in favor of the owner or manager of twenty negroes. Altogether it produced a decided effect on public sentiment.

It was perhaps the severest blow the Confederacy ever received, as it did more than anything else to alienate the affections of the common people, without whose support it could not live for a day. It was not only regarded as a confession that the new Government was not able to depend upon the voluntary support of the people, with which it so triumphantly started out—which, of course, happened also to you, and must happen to any Government in a long-continued struggle—but it opened a wide door to demagogues to appeal to the non-slaveholding class, and make them believe that the only issue was the protection of slavery, in which they were to be sacrificed for the sole benefit of the masters. The cry was rung through the country that it was a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight." This was undoubtedly the weakest point in our position, and you can well imagine the state of political feeling such an appeal was calculated to bring about, and the great difficulty the supporters of the war had in meeting it. That this law was a great calamity to the Southern cause I regard as indisputable, but that it was a mistake I am not prepared to assert when I consider the counter calamity which it was intended to avert. The wise man of scripture has said that the "destruction of the poor is their poverty." We were so hard pressed that necessity selected our means for us. Undoubtedly but for it the Southern armies would have been virtually disbanded at the very opening of the great campaign of eighteen hundred and sixty-two, and McClellan would have marched triumphantly into Richmond. The troops

which had enlisted for the war, added to those which had re-enlisted and those whose time had not yet expired, could not have stopped him. This would probably have been decisive of the war, for in this age of railroads and telegraph lines such a contest could not have been maintained by the spasmodic efforts of a volunteer force, as was our War of Independence one hundred years ago. It is necessary also, in relation to the exemption of the managers of negroes from conscription to give a word of explanation concerning that enactment. It may not have occurred to the people of the North that our slaves were not an element of weakness to us, as it was asserted confidently that they would be. On the contrary, they proved a source of positive strength, in that by tilling the soil, conducting our domestic industries, and producing our supplies, they enabled the entire capable white population to take up arms. By this means we far exceeded the ratio which in all wars should exist between those who fight in the field and those who labor at home. For example, one soul out of every six in North Carolina served in the army. The exemption of managers and owners of negroes from conscription may therefore be called an unwise attempt to do a most wise thing, to wit, to utilize to the utmost the capacity of a black population of four millions to contribute to the support of the war. Whether this could have been done in some less objectionable but equally effective way it would be an assumption of wisdom after the fact for me now to say.

Here permit me to call your attention to the conduct of the southern slaves during that war. You had been taught, by press, pulpit and hustings, to believe that they were an oppressed, abused and diabolically treated race; that their groanings daily and hourly appealed to heaven, whilst their shackles and their scars testified in the face of all humanity against their treatment. No doubt many of you believed the harrowing story, for there was much like it, only worse, in your own early history.

How was this grave impeachment of a whole people sustained, when you went among them to emancipate them from the horrors of their serfdom? When the war began, naturally you expected insurrections, incendiary burnings, murder and outrage, with all the terrible conditions of servile war. There were not wanting fanatical wretches who did their utmost to excite it. Did you find it so? Here is what you found. Within hearing of the guns that were roaring to set them free, with the land stripped of its male population, and none around them except the aged, the women and the children, they not only failed to embrace their opportunity of vengeance, but for the most part they failed to avail themselves of the chance of freedom itself. They remained quietly on our plantations, cultivated our fields and cared for our mothers, wives and little ones with a faithful love and a loyal kindness which, in the nature of things, could only be born of sincere good will. Very few, indeed, comparatively, followed your armies as they swept by the old homesteads, and a still smaller number fled from their homes to get under its protection. No murder, no outrage, no burnings characterized their course. Not a hand was raised in vengeance by the southern slave when the supreme opportunity came to him. Even those who left the plantations did so mostly by stealth, as though ashamed of deserting their master's families even for the commendable purpose of joining themselves to freedom. This was the general rule. From the day of their emancipation to the present moment, except where instigated by the evil counsels of bad white men, their demeanor towards their late masters has been characterized

mostly by kindness and considerate respect. I know of no instance in the world's history when a people similarly situated have behaved better on the whole. These facts are significant. That they are complimentary in the highest degree to the black race no one doubts; do they not also say enough for the southern whites, in regard to their rule as masters, to justify you in thinking better of them than perhaps you have been accustomed to do? According to well known moral laws this kindly loyalty of the one race could not have been gotten by the cruelty and oppression of the other. [Applause.] It will do you no harm to reflect upon this.

Whilst the Confederate armies were holding their own in the field and the civil authorities were administering its affairs in the ordinary grooves, there was but little excitement or political feeling in the public mind. It had been supposed that the war could be fought through without any disturbances of the ordinary functions of civil government, or any strain upon the muniments of their civil rights. But so soon as the fortunes of the Confederacy began to ebb; so soon as the superior numbers and resources of the North began to be seriously felt, the managers of the South came to feel the necessity of resorting to extraordinary means, and this feeling of serenity was rudely disturbed. Political discontent and distrust began to prevail. Perhaps in this respect was made the initial mistake of the whole secession movement: a mistake, the fatality of which increased day by day to the end. We started out without revolution of any kind, with all the machinery of society, State and Federal, in complete operation. There was simply a transfer of the central authority from the United States to the Confederate States of America. The same bond of Union or Constitution was adopted, save a change of a few strokes of the pen. In thus avoiding the alarms of revolution and giving assurance to the timid of the security of society at the outset, a great point was undoubtedly gained. But this was dearly paid for. These smoothly flowing conditions could not of course be maintained. No consideration was given to the dangers of that coming period when hard necessity should compel the setting aside of civil rights and peaceful forms, and the substitution of the harsh features of revolution—at a moment, too, when the government most needed the warm support of public opinion. Looked at simply with a view to success, in my opinion the seceding States should have faced the most ultra measures of revolution at the very start; they should have formed no National government and should have bound themselves by the shackles of no Constitution. To face the great and terrible odds against them in their struggle with a people three times their numbers and ten times their wealth, with the world for a recruiting ground of armies and of means, they should have stripped themselves naked of every vestige of law, constitution or restraint which in any way hindered or enumbered the arm of war, and should have submitted every energy, every element of strength to the sole direction of a single will. This would indeed have been a terrible thing to do, but no less fearful was the alternative, and we should not have gone into the thing at all if not willing to embrace every possible means of success. Men would have no doubt made up their minds to it, if instead of glossing over the difficulties and deceiving with fallacious hopes of a short war and easy success, the real facts had been boldly and honestly presented at the initial moment. I tested this better principle of our nature in the re-enlist-

ing of my own regiment when its term was about to expire in 1862. I did this most successfully by telling them the simple truth, that there was a long and terrible war before them ; hardship and suffering and death for the most of them ; that no man could foresee the end—but that their country needed them and its cause would be lost without them. That was all, and it was sufficient. That regiment, the 26th North Carolina, led by the gallant Colonel Harry Burgwyn, the son of a noble Boston woman, left six hundred dead and wounded on the heights of Gettysburg, with their heroic young commander among them. A number of these were found within that deadly stone wall which Lee's whole army had so vainly attempted to scale. [Applause].

But this course was not adopted, and the usual disappointment followed. When conscription came, as I have said, complaints began ; when conscription was extended complaints grew louder ; when complaints became angry, the suspension of *habeas corpus* was authorized and martial law—that is to say, no law—was allowed to be proclaimed, if need be. This, of course, increased and deepened the discontent, and from that time forward there was in several of the States, notably North Carolina and Georgia, an irritating sense of wrong, caused by the attempt of the Confederate Executive to enforce the laws of Congress, and the efforts of the State to protect the personal rights of their citizens. Simple justice requires me to say that there was no disposition on the part of the President of the Confederacy to violate these rights *per se*. Indeed the disposition was quite the contrary. He never abused the extraordinary powers given him by Congress ; in fact, scarcely resorted to them at all.

So great was his reverence, and that of the Southern mind at large, for all the old-time muniments of personal liberty, that nearly every claim of the States in behalf of their citizens was conceded—oftentimes at what appeared to be a sacrifice of the public interest. I believe when you view these things dispassionately and calmly you will feel bound to give proper credit to both Confederate and State authorities for their efforts during all the confusion of those unhappy times to preserve both the essence and the forms of personal liberty under the strongest temptations to disregard them. I feel that it would not be too much in me to say here that we far exceeded your States, and certainly your Federal Government, in this important respect, though the strain upon you was not nearly so hard as upon us. From September, 1862, to May, 1865, I was Chief Magistrate of the State of North Carolina ; and when eleven years afterwards I was again inaugurated Governor for the third time, the proudest boast which I could make in regard to my previous service was that during my administration the old legal maxim *inter arma silent leges* was expunged, and in its place was written *inter arma leges audiebantur*. The laws were heard amidst all the roar of cannon. No man within the jurisdiction of the State of North Carolina was denied the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus*, the right of trial by jury, or the equal protection of the laws, as provided by our Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

It would, perhaps, be not uninteresting to you to know something of the curious experience through which the Southern people passed during that period in the matter of physical resources. You can scarcely imagine the feeling which comes to a people when isolated as we were, and shut out from communication with all the world. A nation in prison we were, in the midst of civilized society, and forced to rely exclusively upon ourselves for everything. When the

war began, with the exception of a few cotton and woolen mills and the crude establishments common to all plantations and villages, we were utterly without manufactures of any kind. So far as I can recall there was not a foundry for casting a cannon, a shop for making a musket, nor a mill for making a pound of powder, within the limits of the eleven seceding States. Not a grain scythe, nor an axe, nor a bar of railroad iron was made in the country, except the few, possibly, occasionally produced in the smallest quantities and in the crudest style of temporary makeshift. In short, nearly all the staple articles of human necessity, for both peace and war, we were without the machinery and the establishments for making. But the land was full of resources, and the raw material for the manufacture of all that we needed. And strange as it may appear to you, it was full of mechanical capacity to deal with this material. If you could have witnessed the zeal and the success with which our native genius took hold of it, under the extraordinary stimulus of the times, you would no longer believe that New England Yankees possess a monopoly of the American inventive faculty. [Laughter] Cotton and woolen mills quickly sprang up and the capacity of existing ones was enlarged. Foundries for casting cannon, shops for making fire arms, swords and bayonets, and mills for making powder were set up in abundance. Shoes and blankets were made by the hundred thousand, and transportation wagons and camp equipage of all kinds soon supplied the demand. A rigid blockade of our coast at a very early date shut off our hopes of supplies from abroad; and yet that blockade was not so successfully maintained but that needed articles crept in in considerable quantities, though fitfully. A long-legged steamer which I purchased in the Clyde for the State of North Carolina, made eleven round trips from Bermudas into the port of Wilmington, carrying out cotton and bringing back supplies of those things which could not be procured at home, especially grain scythes, card clothing for the factories, hand cards for our old-fashioned looms, and medicines, with large quantities of shoes, blankets and army cloths. She often entered the port in broad daylight, in the face of the blockading fleet. The situation called into active use all the mechanical talent of our people. The village or cross-road blacksmith refurnished his shop and made tools and agricultural implements for his neighbors; the shoemaker, the cooper, the wheelwright, and the tanner, all sprang into sudden importance. Even the druggist compounded from the wondrous flora of the country substitutes for nearly all the drugs of commerce, which if not so efficacious were at least more harmless than the genuine article. The devices and expedients adopted in all the industries, the social and domestic departments of our daily life, were most ingenious, though sometimes ludicrous. Here the subtle contrivings of the female sex became most conspicuous. The silks, merinos, alpaca, and other dress goods of our woman-folks, known as "store clothes," which were on hand when the blockade began, were saved and carefully used for weddings and other occasions of high state. For calico prints were substituted the colored plaids manufactured in our cotton mills or woven in the hand-looms of the old plantation.

Perhaps you have given some consideration to the importance which a woman attaches to the bonnet; and unless your domestic education has been neglected you are doubtless aware how essential in all civilized lands the satisfactory adjustment of the bonnet question is to the peace of mankind. This was now upon us with all its force! There

we were, with a bonnet-wearing population of at least three millions in our midst, and not a bonnet factory within the Confederate States, and with a frowning cordon of ships of war guarding every port to keep out this essential army supply as contraband of war! The situation was indeed most appalling; but my fair country-women were equal to it, as they have been to all other emergencies which they have been called on to face. As in the Wars of the Roses, the women were greater partizans than the men, and with them the memories of the struggle were longer in dying out, so it proved with us.

They submitted to the privations and hardships of the situation with a cheerful patience which shamed the boasted courage of man. In these inconsiderable matters they showed that beneath the thin veneer of personal vanity there lay the great and noble qualities of common sense and patriotism. They took the bright straw of the wheat, oats, and rye, and the husk of the corn ears, rich in the beautiful coloring of silver and old gold, and with deft fingers wove for themselves all manner of head-gear, as charming as any which ever came from the shops of France or Italy the natural earthly homes of artistic beauty! As to the effects produced, I beg to assure the inexperienced in my audience that in gazing upon Southern girls thus arrayed from top to toe in home-made striped cottons, which we called Alamance plaids, set off by corn-shuck bonnets, the work of their own hands, I have felt all the usual symptoms of a violent attack—increased action of the heart, shortness of breath, and that general feeling of “all-overishness,” as strong and irresistible as could have been superinduced by any other possible female get-up. I became sadly aware of the fact that it did not matter how they dressed, they had the same power to find the soft spot in our hearts every time. It is male destiny. In the language of St. Paul, “Brethren, I speak as a man,”—“I lie not.” [Great laughter.]

Nor were their efforts confined to the habilitating of their own sex. They made hats of the same material, and nearly all the clothing worn by men and boys was woven and made up by them, of wool or cotton or a mixture of the two materials, by the aid of the old hand-looms.

In the way of eating and drinking we did better, especially with regard to the leading articles of diet. Our farm productions, always abundant and good, were made still more so by the fact that there was no sale for our great staples, cotton and tobacco, and our fields were therefore devoted to edible products. Of alcoholic liquors we had too much. Corn whiskey and apple brandy were both abundant and cheap. If any of my auditors happened to be in Eastern North Carolina during that time he will doubtless have heartburning recollections of the apple brandy he found there, under the somewhat mysterious denomination of “New Dip.” But I shall do—what he perhaps did not—forebear. [Laughter.]

When toward the close of the war, by reason of the circumscribing of the scope of country from which the army obtained its supplies, it became necessary for the States to forbid the use of grain for distillation, various other substances were adopted. A drink was made from potatoes, from rice, from pumpkins and turnips, and from the domestic sugar cane, called sorghum. A brandy was also made from persimmons. As to sorghum whiskey I can only say that in its flavor and its effects it was decidedly more terrible than “an army with banners.” On the shortest notice it could furnish its victims with the panoramic view of a full managerie. [Laughter.] If at any time during your

visit to the South a well directed stream from a few barrels of it could have been fired into your ranks, you could never have lived to honor me by your attention to night. As to the brandy made from the native persimmon, it had some good traits, one of which was that it partook of the highly astringent qualities of the fruit. I specially commend it to oratory. During the campaign I made for governor in 1864, a speech which I made under the refreshment of this fluid was "pronounced one of the best of my life," my admiring friends declaring it to be such, because the astringent drink had tended to shut me up—and I had said less than usual! Congress could not do wiser than to purchase a quantity of that beverage for its own use. [Applause and laughter.] In the matter of tea, coffee, and sugar we were very badly off. No one can imagine, until he has seen it tried, how dependent people become upon these gentle beverages, especially the aged and infirm. Whilst there are several tolerable substitutes for tea, there is nothing in nature that can at all supply the place of the gracious Arabian berry. It stands alone in the catalogue of generous, refreshing non-intoxicating stimulants, and more so perhaps to the people of the South than to any other in christendom. Whilst our small stock on hand lasted, divers and sundry expedients were adopted to prolong its existence, by mixtures with various substances, parched rye, corn-meal, chestnuts, ochra and sweet potatoes were mingled with small quantities of coffee in the roasting, in the hope that the royal berry would assert its superiority by imparting at least a portion of its flavor to the ignoble compound. But this proved a delusion and a snare. The linked sweetness refused to be long drawn out. Nature abhorred the bibulous miscegenation, and the throes of deathly thirst alone rendered it sufferable. A wag once recommended that it be roasted with pop-corn, for the reason that, in the process of roasting, the pop-corn would all jump out of the pan leaving the original coffee as good as ever. [Laughter.] But when the last grain of coffee had been used, and the last pound of sugar which could be obtained from captured Louisiana had gone with it, then, and not till then, did we realize that the crisis of our fate had come, and blank despair had settled down upon the southern cause. Without the flavor or the shadow of a pretense of the flavor of coffee, we were reduced to the honest truth in the shape of a drink made of parched rye sweetened with sorghum molasses! With a cheerful melancholy this was spoken of as coffee, in deference to the customs of antiquity. [Merriment]. It might with propriety be described as the fluid form of secession—and as the last and a most faithful support of the Confederacy. I wonder did anyone who hears me to night ever taste it? I am firmly persuaded that if all who are present had lived upon it for one week, as we did for three years, they would rise as one man from their seats and extending both hands towards me, would exclaim: "We forgive the war, O, Rebel; we pardon secession; friends and brothers you have suffered enough!" [Tumultuous laughter.] To say, as was the custom, that the hopes of the Confederacy depended upon the brave hearts of its defenders was in effect to take an unpardonable liberty with science; these hopes rested chiefly on the strong stomachs of their defenders! Patriotism had become a question of dyspepsia and nightmare!

But a truce to this jesting with the sadness of our situation.

The physical privations and discomforts did not produce any serious dissatisfaction with our cause. They were borne by all classes with a patient composure. No one was disposed to blame the Gov-

ernment for them. It was the utter hopelessness of the struggle which forced itself upon the popular mind in the beginning of 1864 that increased the discontent and made our people look eagerly around for the ways which led to peace. It was seen that after every great battle, no odds what the result, the losses to the Union arms were immediately supplied, whilst the gaps which were left in our ranks were filled no more. In North Carolina a large party, composed of citizens, whose opinions were not to be despised, favored the making of some effort in the direction of peace. I may say this desire was almost universal, but the difficulty was in finding that way in accordance with the Constitution and laws wherewith we had bound ourselves, and the faith which we had plighted to our Confederates. By acceding to the Confederacy and joining our fortunes to those of the members thereof, an obvious principle of honor and good faith restrained any State from the attempt to make separate terms for itself. According to the Constitution which we had assumed to support, the Confederate Executive and Senate were the lawful agents for the making of treaties. When requested to attempt negotiations for the common benefit their reply was that they had again and again done so, with the invariable answer that no terms could be obtained except such as amounted to unconditional surrender. There is no question but that circumstances rendered it impossible for the Confederate officials to have done more than they did without a manifest violation of the trust reposed in them. They could not commit suicide. So with a full conviction that we were in the rapids and drifting swiftly on to the final and inevitable catastrophe, all parties—State and Federal—were so bound by the trammels of the Constitution we had so unwisely taken upon ourselves to support, that nobody could interfere without apparent dishonor. We could only stand still, watching our brave but ragged and ill-fed battalions as they wasted away in the vain effort to work a miracle which was beyond the reach of human courage, whilst despair lowered sullenly upon the hearts of a noble people, who preferred the worst which fate might have in store for them rather than incur the suspicion of dishonor. We could now see something of that fate. There awaited us not only the usual penalties of subjugation—bitter enough even when inflicted by an organized force restrained by discipline—but all the license of demoralized armies and society in a state of defeat. The land was already darkened by the shadow of those evils which are born of lawlessness and terror. Thieves, murderers, and beasts of prey dominated the land and outraged the helpless. The deserting soldier turned desperado and villain.

“Rough and hard of heart,
With full liberty of the bloody hand,
Did range with conscience wide as hell.”

It looked, indeed, so like chaos come to reign again that the Army of the United States appeared to us as a deliverer when the end came, because its battalions at least seemed to obey somebody and to be governed by some law; and when you think of the devastating “bummers” who followed in its wake, or preceded its march, you will understand the utter desperation of things with us. May God preserve any portion of the American people from the experience of a country drenched in the blood of its sons, desolated by the tramp of armies, exhausted of its substance, bereft of its laws and peace-keepers, and utterly abandoned to the reign of unrestrained and unprincipled violence. I am powerless to describe it or make you even

faintly sensible of its horrors. Our own true and faithful soldiers had not yet returned from the field, and it was not until they arrived at home that these disorders were suppressed and our condition became tolerable.

But these things did end at last, as all things must. The last Confederate soldier laid down his arms, the flag of the Union was triumphant everywhere, and the bloody drama of secession became as a dream.

Slowly violence and disorder passed away and the conservative forces of society began to assert their power in the restoration of law. Their action was quickened by the necessities of an impoverished and well nigh heart broken people, whose industries so sorely needed the protection of peace. Chaos, the first born, spread her wings in flight, bearing her black daughter Erebus with her whilst her nobler progeny Day and Æther began to emerge full of hope and loving promise upon the face of "broad-breasted Earth;" calming and soothing the restless surgings of Civil War. After gloomy Tartarus, the Greek Poet tells us, came *Love*. Will it come to us in our re-creation?

My faith is that of those who believe that all human events—of nations as of individuals—are wisely as well as kindly ordered by the Great Ruler of All for the best interest of His creatures, and so that the very wrath of man is made to praise Him. Bitter to my taste as the results of this Civil War were, day after day has reconciled me to them and convinced me of the wisdom of cheerful submission to the will of Him who brought them about. The Union of these States has been preserved and declared indissoluble; a great and disturbing Constitutional question has been finally settled; and slavery has been forever abolished, no longer to tarnish the fair fame of the great, free Republic. Because it was involved in the question of Constitutional right I fought four years in its defence; on the honor of my manhood, I assure you, though my hairs have since become white, that I would fight eight years against the attempt to reinstate it in my country. [Great applause.] I do not believe there is one man to the hundred in all the South whose sentiments are not the same; I am sure there is not in the land of my nativity and my unchanging love—North Carolina.

I thank the ladies and gentlemen of my audience most earnestly for their presence and attention; I thank you, Union Soldiers of Massachusetts, for this opportunity of saying in your midst a word in behalf of those who fought and suffered, and *lost*. [Long continued applause.]



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W. Manchester, Ind.
APR 1953

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